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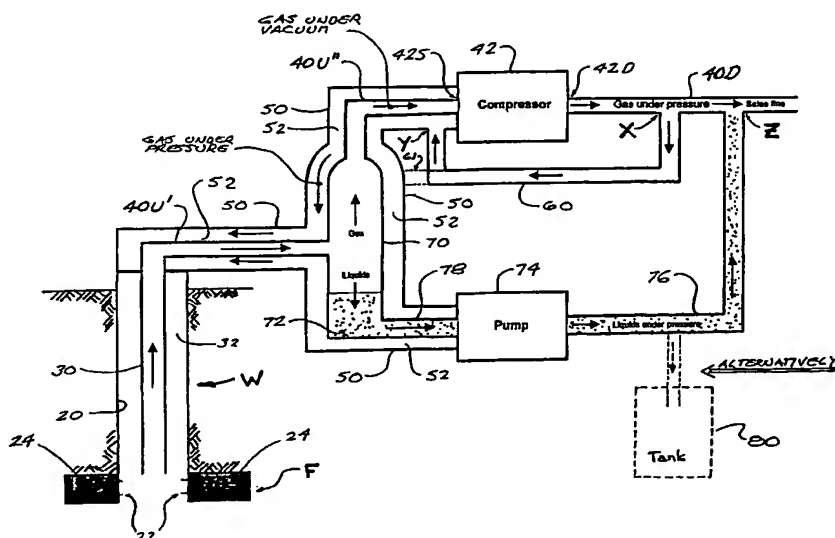
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **OPTIMUM PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES INC.**
[CA/CA]; 9541 - 21 Street SE, Calgary, Alberta T2C 4G1 (CA).
- (72) Inventor; and
- (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **WILDE, Glenn**
[CA/CA]; 9541 - 21 Street SE, Calgary, Alberta T2C 4G1 (CA).
- (74) Agent: **TOMKINS, Donald, V.**; Miller Thomson LLP,
2700, 10155-102 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4G8 (CA).
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Declarations under Rule 4.17:

— as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for the following designations AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: **POSITIVE PRESSURE GAS JACKET FOR A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE**



(57) Abstract: The present invention provides a method and apparatus whereby the intake pipeline running between the production chamber of a natural gas well and the suction inlet of an associated wellhead compressor is completely enclosed, in airtight fashion, within a jacket of natural gas under positive pressure (i.e., higher than atmospheric). Being enclosed inside this "positive pressure jacket", the intake pipeline is not exposed to the atmosphere at any point. This allows gas to be drawn into the compressor through the intake pipeline under a negative pressure, without risk of air entering the intake pipeline should a leak occur in the pipeline. If such a leak occurs, there will merely be a harmless transfer of gas from the positive pressure jacket into the intake pipeline. If a leak occurs in the positive pressure jacket, gas therefrom will escape into the atmosphere, and entry of air into the positive pressure jacket will be impossible.

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